what is good for the goose is good for the gander

THE GOOSE EGG

ISSUE #2

Two in the Garden

by Tali Burry-Schnepp

The Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation is a three-story archive and gallery located in downtown Manhattan in an out-of-commission synagogue where the painter Milton Resnik lived and worked. In this unconventional home, Resnick created remarkable contributions to the body of abstract expressionist paintings coming out of New York from the 1950s to the turn of the century. The show I saw and set out to document is of Resnick's later works alongside a group of small works by Matthew Wong, a young painter who quickly rose to high esteem as one of the great artists of the last decade. There were two separate shows installed in the foundation: the one which included Wong, titled "U+ME" that occupied the first two floors which is a catalog of curated thematic relationships between the work of the two artists, and on the third floor a small show of Resnik's so-called "Insignia" paintings. My experience did not lead me to feel a stark distinction between these installations so I have treated them as relatively continuous, a testament to the two painter's organic relationship. Wong was certainly an admirer of Resnick's, but the correspondence is deeper than emulation; it is true sympathy.

Standing in front of the defunct synagogue, the facade already sets the tone, with one egg of life pattern in each massive window and a star of David carved into the stone above them; this place is earnest, trying for the heavens.

cont'd on pg. 8

Movies From the Wound

a Review of *Pulse*

by Shea Stevenson

Pulse (2001) is a Japanese horror movie about ghosts, the early internet, and a series of friends at various points of disconnection. It's good for a host of normal reasons: iconic visuals, still-radical sound design, knockout premise–but it's also, for many more reasons, bizarre. There is a sense watching *Pulse* that it is not borne of the same beast as other (even very similar) movies. Its language is familiar, but its fears are more nuanced, sometimes less cohesively expressed, and certainly more esoteric than those of its sisters.

Pulse is a shadowboxer. It does not exactly know what it's afraid of, but it knows the enemy is in the room. Its whole list of fears inevitably goes beyond the ones it outright states; their implications add up to an omni-fear that hangs like a cowl over the movie; *Pulse* doesn't know what the fuck is happening to it. It is not scared *of something* (where is its enemy?), but necessarily *for itself*. Throughout, it tends to leave the specific nature of its dangers nebulous, often transient, but what remains fixed is a palpable concern *for* its characters safety, far stronger than its interest in whatever's harming them. Even the ghosts in *Pulse* never feel like monsters, but fellow victims, extra folds in the movie's obsession with complete isolation.

cont'd on pg. 11

POOR TREATMENT

by Bill Wallace

Over the last two months of 2023, the *New York Times* published a series of investigative reports about how a spate of violent attacks were preceded by failures in New York City's systems for managing people who are homeless and have mental illnesses. The reporters had spent over a year "examining how often homeless mentally ill people under the care of the city have committed acts of violence," through compiling police records, government documentation, court filings, and news reports and interviews with more than 250 people. The article claimed to identify "94 instances in the past decade in which breakdowns of the city's social safety net preceded the violence, sometimes by just days or hours," and proceeded to analyze several in detail. One featured a man with schizophrenia who had been allowed to leave a hospital, only to stab his mother's caregiver 37 times hours later. Another profiled a man who, experiencing intense "untreated paranoia," pulled a hammer out of his backpack and "crack[ed] the skull" of a man on a subway platform. The articles were illustrated by childhood pictures of the victims and the perpetrators, interspersed with videos and images chosen to evoke dread: train tracks at night, a stranger at a distance.

I work in an agency that serves people who are homeless, and over the last two years, I have watched the city's sense of panic about the threat of people with serious mental illness (SMI) committing random acts of extreme violence reach a fever pitch. Many of the subjects of this collective phobia are our clients. And yet my proximity has done little to help me understand whether this panic is hysteria or a reaction to something real.

cont'd on pg. 10

On Nevada again

by Anna Kristina Moseidjord

In the cracked sob of land
between Reno and Utah,
I read poems written to other women.

The boy I suck off sometimes
was born somewhere
close to here.

He has beautiful hair and
lies less than I do.

Friends, a fuckin' fever dream, and
something blue.

The hypnotizing electric storm
at the end of
that day.

Songs played.
Words and sounds and rhythms,
which — still now — lust and suffer
and love enough to tempt
and be tempted.

The tree is calling through snakes' lips —
You could know and be loved.

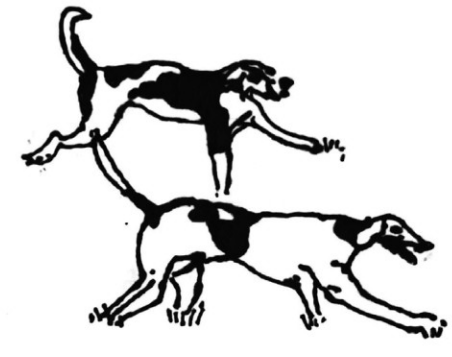
What else?

Universal 6

by Ashton Carless

Coca-Cola shame, sweet like
Scrawling. Park the wrist
Of your writing hand. Do it
Secret, and completely unsure
Of any outcome other than:
This accumulation and development
Towards a collection varying in
Size, stock or substance. Yet
All are, undeniably, articles
Of this ephemera.

So, as paper must, house this
History. In your skin, like as
Parchment once was. Bad poetry,
The Bible, no more than every single
Story ever. And that is all.



Title and Illustrations and by Henry Murphy

the Goose Egg

issue #2

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Issue #2 is here. Welcome!

The Goose Egg a quarterly gazette, publishing prose in the form of creative nonfiction, story, opinion and poetry of all sorts. And we are FREE (we intend on staying that way but you can donate of course via the QR code on the back). *The Goose Egg* is intended to be a people's publication. We are amateurs publishing stuff we like. We are no authority. If you write anything, I encourage you to submit. Send me your responses, diary entries, grocery lists, and manifestos. All I want is to have this thing that people interact with, a few pages of art lovingly assembled for you, my darling, to enjoy. So, please donate and submit and follow and read and react and come to our events and give one to a friend and read and write.

This issue's very loose, mostly optional theme was Night. Night because of winter, because of home and sleep and darkness. Night of the soul in death and night of the other world. You can see night in the lonely city, the strange flip side, night in the changing of realms. Night is the dark end and the place of dreamlike ascension. There is night in all poetry. Perhaps I am reaching. Either way you should read it, and draw your own conclusions.

As night turns to dawn and the winter into spring, plans are becoming reality. We are working on a website where previous issues will be posted and maybe even some merch! If you missed out on the last issue you can currently find it on Internet Archive (buried as it might be) which is where I will be uploading all issues after the print run runs out. To keep up with all things Goose follow our instagram @the_gooseegg.

Thank you for coming to this place in print. Please try and enjoy yourself.

-Isa

pages 2 and 3 Illustrations by Ana Neifeld

Bonsai

by Binyamin Babayof

It comes even when you're sleeping
Creeps in your head from under the pillow
Shame is a motherfucker

My ego is not too big
My ego is bonsai
Fun size
Shoes don't fit my will to overcome
Ego is snow on my neck
In the shower with a lover who is asking you
to go find a towel
There is one towel
In the kitchen

Let us not pretend
Let us be naked
And stinky
And pissy when we are hungry
Let us not hide
"But God would not approve"
Render unto caesar what is caesar's
Render unto the constellations
what you can longer bear to suppress within yourself

Resistance is the process of giving up
Forgoing the apple was never an option
Chekhov's snake
"No thank you, I already ate"
No kings or prophet or high priest
will be annointed with oil or with wine
We are in the beginning

Resistance is to open like a spring flower
Here in the winter
Snowflakes to kiss my forehead
The violence of resurrection that
nobody ever talks about
Rise up fully clothed
Made and made again in his perfect image
still

My love is not an ocean
My call is to graze in the forgotten landscape of wilted subterfuge
My love is to kindle in the architecture of deceit
Like Mary, but less so, inseminated with the truth
Birthing the world
Again

The mixed breed of purity and gods light
and guillotine executions and murderous Marxist revolutions
and stubbing my toe on the toys scattered around the living room

All indications of life are hopeful
Even the unbearable

Poems by Maja Demska
Translation from Polish by Monika Zaleska

∴

leżę w nieswoim łóżku w nieswoim
domu i po jakimś czasie
moje stopy są bardzo daleko
opieram buty o krawędź wanny
i moje ręce są bardzo daleko
jedna dłoń pije wino w salonie
druga dłoń skubie nitkę w dywanie
moje usta to teraz radio
moje słowa to serwis informacyjny

tu mówi mebel

prowadzę dziś dom pogrzebowy dla wizytówek
w każdej kieszeni mam małą trumnę
kasztany, tytoń i drobne
rzucane na wieko, na wieczną pamiątkę
jutro będzie tu to samo
biuro matrymonialne dla popielniczek
mydelniczek, puderniczek i tego
co się z nimi rymuje

zauważyliście sekretarkę
co w sercu ma urnę
a w ustach bluetooth?

KWIAT PAPROCI

przeczucie cudu i katastrofy
budzi mnie chwilę przed budzikiem
albo minutę po północy

przez załzawione oczy
w ciemności widzę kwiat paproci
drobny sprzęt RTV w trybie czuwania

∴

I lay in notmy bed in notmy
house and after some time
my feet are very far away
I rest my shoes in the rim of the tub
and my hands are very far away
one hand drinks wine in the salon
the other pick a thread from the carpet
now my mouth is a radio
my words are the news broadcast

"This is the Secretaire speaking"

today I am running a funeral home for business cards
in each drawer I have a small coffin
chestnuts, tobacco and small change
thrown in the grave, in everlasting memory
everything will be the same tomorrow
a marriage bureau for ashtrays,
soap dishes, compacts
and other small boxes like that

did you notice the secretaire
with an urn in her heart
and a bluetooth in her mouth?

FERN FLOWER

a feeling of wonder and catastrophe
wakes me a little before the alarm clock
or a minute after midnight

in the darkness
through bleary eyes I see the fern flower
a tiny device blinking on standby

100 Hail Mary's

by Angela Scire

Mrs. Cusmano picked me out of twenty boys and girls. One hundred and ninety fingers were in the air. I had ten fingers under my knees. Sixty seconds pass. Won't you pray for the one sinner in the room? Two leaking eyes gaze up at the one bloody man on the cross. I visited confession three times and wished the sin away. I was punished with one hundred Hail Mary's. My hands grew two blisters. I sat fifteen pews from the altar and chewed stale crackers. I wrote one hundred Hail Mary's to wish the Sunday away. Out of the seven days of the week, Sunday brought the most dread. Mrs. Cusmano kept me from going to mass five times. I visited confession three more times and wished Mrs. Cusmano away. My shirt showed one inch more chest than necessary. I prayed one hundred Hail Mary's and not one was answered.

top left illustration by Henry Murphy, bottom right by Nick Potoskie

Bead of Oil

by Gwen Dorset

Illustrations by Ana Neifeld

It happened for me when I was living with the Mulvaneys. They rented out their spare bedroom, which properly should have been only an office, seeing as how instead of a private entrance, there was a glass double door leading out into the living room, so transparent and drafty that it might as well have not been there at all. The Mulvaneys' sole concession to my privacy was a pair of broken plastic blinds from the 80s, caked in dust. When I moved in, I asked if I could put proper curtains up. They said no. The floor was made of a horrible spongy wood that, I was told many times, I would be responsible for financially in the event of any damage. It was so soft, barely sealed in with thin wax, that the merest disruption—a pair of dropped scissors, a heavy footstep—produced a fat blister in the varnish. This caused me no end of distress. But that's neither here nor there. The rent was cheap, and despite their rules, the Mulvaneys rarely bothered me, never speaking when we passed in the hall, and keeping their food in a locked cage inside the fridge.

When I lived with the Mulvaneys, I was doing data entry for a small dry cleaner's that was trying to digitize their business. When people came in, I logged their names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and the type of service that they had purchased. Often days would pass with only six or seven entries, and I would help out behind the counter with small tasks, like arranging shirts on hangers or folding slacks. The elderly proprietors never trusted me enough to let me run the machines, and for good reason. Try as I might to be of use, I made things worse more often than not. They only kept me around because they thought I could work the computer better than the other employees, and make better coffee. In fact, while I could type marginally faster than average, the coffee I made was distinctly worse. It always tasted burnt.

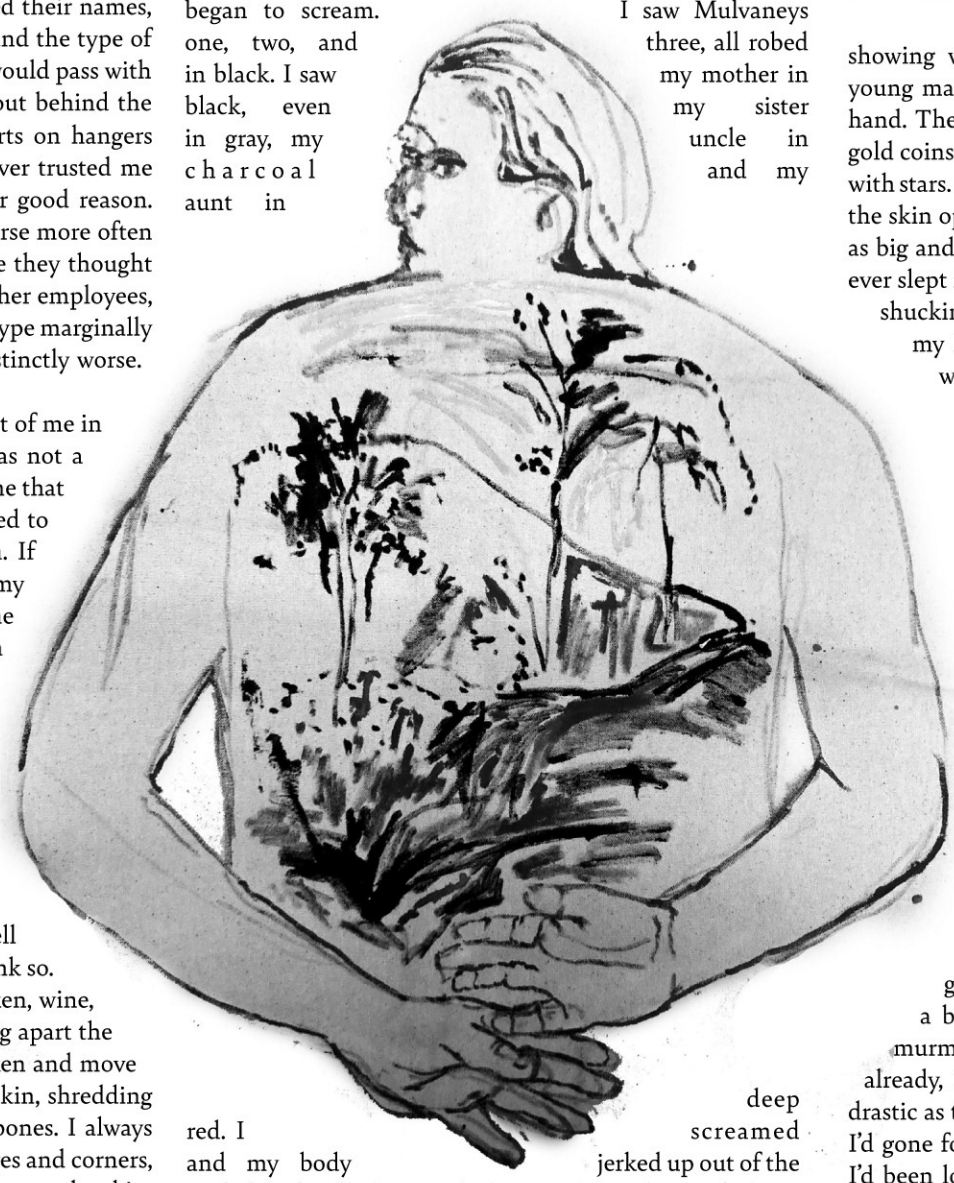
I wonder what you would've thought of me in those days if you saw me on the street. I was not a particularly striking person at that time, no one that would easily catch your eye, and if I happened to do so, it wouldn't be for any positive reason. If you did notice me, it would probably be for my miserable expression, or maybe my squalene eczema, which flared up on my palms, between my fingers, and on the inside of my elbows when I was stressed. I was stressed every day back then. I got styes constantly. I woke up with cold fingers of fear pressing down on my throat, and went to bed in a swamp of sweat, crying over splinters in the floor, or something my boss had said, some criticism I knew was justified. I couldn't keep it together. Every day, I was melting apart. Could you tell that from looking at me? Unfortunately, I think so.

All I ate back then was coffee, chicken, wine, and apples. I had a special method for picking apart the chicken. I would buy a whole rotisserie chicken and move through it methodically, slurping down the skin, shredding the meat into fine strands, gnawing on the bones. I always saved the wings for last, savoring the crisp edges and corners, the places where the delicate bone and gristle met the skin. The skin on the wings reminded me of scabs, and I always ate my own scabs. So, I guess that's another thing I would eat. The wine was more complicated. I would get creative with it, mixing it in with the coffee, splashing it on the masticated chicken. But then, you don't need to hear about all my foul habits. They're not really relevant to what happened, unless there's some connection under the surface, of which I'm consciously unaware.

All you have to know is that I was a deeply unhappy person. My life was fear. I stole things from customers' pockets. I was not pathetic in a sweet way, though perhaps you would've taken pity on me if you had seen me then. My unhappiness hung over me like a yellow fog, tailing me everywhere like a mangy cur. I would stare at my face in the mirror for hours, slapping it occasionally, trying to figure out who was in there. I felt I was all alone in the world, and I was right, but that didn't mean I wanted to die.

It happened in the most humiliating of ways. One minute I was hiding in my room, ass on the mattress, hunching mesmerized over a piece of chicken, and the next I heard a loud noise, and I was choking. On what? On the bone? Had I swallowed the bone? No, it was some blob of flesh, muscular and greasy, lodged deep in my throat. My lungs would not empty or fill, and my heartbeat was hard and tight, wrapping around the wires of my veins. And I was so dizzy I had the feeling I'd had as a little girl, falling asleep, that my bed was spinning round and round in the middle of a hedge maze. Gradually my vision faded from pink to orange to purple to black. Quite beautiful! Then only pain.

I woke up in an unfamiliar dress, in an unfamiliar bed, in an unfamiliar room. My muscles were stiff and sore, and I felt crazed, like I had that time I ate a quarter cup of instant coffee granules. Or maybe what I felt was feverish. Spots of heat pulsed in my cheeks. The bed was so strange and narrow. The pillow under my head rustled softly beneath my weight from the small motions of my neck. I pressed a hand to my cheek and my whole body ached. I heard a chorus of gasps. And when I looked in the direction that the noise had come from, I myself gasped, I myself began to scream. I saw Mulvaneys one, two, and three, all robed in black. I saw my mother in black, even my sister in gray, my uncle in charcoal and my aunt in deep red. I screamed and my body jerked up out of the coffin as if pulled upwards by a string. This can't be, I thought, but *this is really happening.* I was up in the rafters, clawing at the light fixtures, before I could really tell what was going on.



High above the pitiful group of mourners—fewer than ten—I looked down on the tops of their heads. They seemed so fragile, their scalps showing through their hair, hands like shaken leaves. There was so much shrieking, much of it flying out from my own mouth. The hairs inside of my nose bristled as a new smell came to greet me, something like roasted meat and boiled bones, ripe egg and softening fruit. It overwhelmed me in a flash, like a veil slipping over my face and bound fast with a ribbon, a snuffing sensation far worse than the choking had been. For I knew this was no ordinary scent. I knew, as surely as if a voice had whispered it in my ear, that it was the stench of human sin, sloughing off the funeral attendees like chaff from wheat. It was a smell with a texture, thick and spuming, like a great clot of mucus, and it was bent on infiltrating my every orifice. It was going to kill me again, or so I supposed, and so I called out, in a voice unlike my own, "Oh, you are murderers! The stench of your sin will send me back into my grave!" Or something to that effect.

I was floating higher now, up above the tabernacle, seemingly higher still than the roof of the church could go. The ceiling was a dark blue punctuated by small metal stars, and I wondered if it would hurt when my head butted up against them. The odor of sin was headier than the richest wine. It smelled so bad that it almost smelled really good. My hands and feet felt all numb and puffy, and I looked down expecting to see them swollen, but they were placid and pale like the hands and feet of dolls. Down below the mourners jerked like a jumble of squawking chickens, their heads now resembling tiny drops of blood. The smell was filling me all over now. It was puncturing my lungs and passing viscous through my veins. It pinched my nose and made me very dizzy. The church seemed to be beating slowly like the wings of a dove. My head brushed up against one of the metal stars, but I couldn't feel a thing.

I then had a series of memory flashes, showing what had come between dying and waking. A young man with a great pale moon face taking me by the hand. The cold weight of his hand on mine, like a stack of gold coins. The sky wriggling with fish, a great lake teeming with stars. Great spongy teeth gnawing at my thighs, splitting the skin open like a grape. The teeth were electric lavender, as big and soft as pillows on a king-sized bed—not that I'd ever slept in one, mind. My skin peeling off me, as gently as shucking corn. A crown of blood roses descending onto my head, another at my wrist. The ecstasy of blood without pain, flowing out like a river to the sea from a gash in my belly, ruby red and seeded like jam. It reminded me of being a child, the roll of wonder as my father lifted the fry basket and shook off the boiling oil, which rained down as droplets, glistening and glamorous as chandelier beads, or the rhinestones on a showgirl. There was nothing so glowing and perfect as that oil, and I always wanted to thrust my hands into it, see my skin transform. Nothing so perfect, until I entered that space between life and death.

Remembering this, a calm descended around me, up there in the rafters. I had the sense I had been entrusted with precious cargo. I stepped forward, and the air shifted around me to make a little cushion, buoying me up just enough. I strode forth on tiptoes, feeling as dainty as a flower girl at an elegant wedding, who might be carrying a bouquet of orchids aloft. I paid no mind to the murmurs of surprise from down below. Somehow, already, I knew myself to be beyond them, as sure and drastic as though my childhood dreams had come true, and I'd gone for a swim in the deep fryer. The thing for which I'd been longing, with a deep, buried, unknowing longing, had finally come to pass, and I need not worry about being a woman anymore. I was another kind of thing.

I proceeded through the church unscathed. At the entrance, I knelt and landed softly on my knees, dust puffing around me in a fine cloud. I fled out the door, so that my mourners would not catch me, and knifed deep into the city, heart racing, an irrepressible giggle burbling out from between my lips. In my stiff party dress—a peach monstrosity I never would have chosen—I felt like a bride running joyful towards her groom. I could feel roses blossoming in my cheeks, a different flower blooming in my stomach, vines spreading outwards towards my fingertips, along my veins, inside. I yanked my hair free from its net and kept running, plunging deeper until I reached the clocktower at the city's heart, where the smell was strongest of all.

The Palimpsest of Landscape

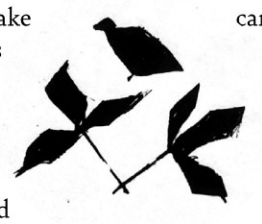
Pick an open spot on the crest of a modest rise in the foothills between Munich and the Alps (of which there are many in this undulating assemblage of woods, fields, and meadows). Do this in early spring: turn south and behold in the distance the still snow-covered peaks of the mountains, waylaid in the middle distance by a line of rounded hills covered with fir trees, in places breached by broad valleys that offer ready access to the higher elevations behind them. Turn west or east and the land appears like an ocean of enormous green waves of different shades, uniquely unthreatening and interspersed by creeks, rivers, and lakes. Look north and the view widens and becomes monotonously flat as the mounded swells fade into a sameness of sand and gravel.

Walk a few hundred yards downhill toward the well-watered depression between this rise and the next and stop about half-way before reaching the bottom. Start digging and with some luck, you may find evidence of habitation or trees, or both. Until the advent of stone and plaster construction (beginning with churches), dwellings in this region of western Europe were made of wooden logs, which can still be found by removing several feet of soil. After a generation or two, the organic building material had deteriorated to make them uninhabitable without extensive repairs that required straight trees of a substantial size. The woods in the immediate surroundings had been depleted of suitable timber, and instead of cutting and hauling logs from a distance, it was easier to move to the next village where a fresh and ready supply of trees grew. Excavating signs of former tree growth in an open field is more challenging. However, the evidence uncovered by archaeobotanists suggests that the landscape of several thousand years ago was not as sharply divided into open and wooded areas as it became later. Domestic animals grazed in an open mixed forest of birch, elm, and fir in which sufficient sunlight reached the forest floor offering enough roughage to sustain pigs, goats, and cows. Their grazing reduced the number of saplings that grew to maturity, and as a result the forest gradually opened up. It probably looked more like an orchard with unusually large trees or even an English garden. This image of a rolling landscape with scattered trees surrounded by expanses of grass imprinted itself on the Western European mind as an ideal of a landscape, both natural and friendly to humans, later evoked in gardens and parks, and painted images–often meant to depict a pastoral idyll or even the Garden of Eden.

The landscape shaped an ancestral memory–a subconscious layer in the collective human mind (at least in the context of western Europe). But the earth itself, like a palimpsest, is organic and preserves its history imperfectly. Geologists, archaeologists. and historians, among others, are experts at scraping away to reveal erased texts and interpreting them as islands of a known past.

Stay in the same spot but let your inner eye move backwards a few thousand years from the period of open woodland and the wooden villages (depending on your focus, from the Holocene, the current interglacial, the Neolithic), and humans will get scarcer, you may see extinct megafauna, and the trees will first change composition and then disappear altogether. Meltwater from receding Alpine glaciers manifests as enormous temporary lakes and rivers. Deposits of sand, gravel, and boulders of all sizes are accumulated underneath and in front of the glaciers. Accelerate the time machine as you reel back the millennia, and glaciers and trees will alternate in cycles lasting hundreds of thousands of years. Every time the ice advances and retreats, the palimpsest of landscape is imperfectly overwritten. Traces of prior glaciers remain in the ground and in the appearance and locations of rivers, lakes, hills, and meadows, to be read presently by geologists.

Now go back to the present and climb that gentle ridge again. Due south of Munich there is a wide valley in the wooded hills that bar direct access to the high alpine ridges–it is an ancient spot of weakness in the bedrock that has been deepened and widened during successive ice ages as an outlet of glacial flow from the mountains on their way downhill toward the plains. Alpine glaciers transform steep and narrow river canyons into wide and gently sloped valleys. In the current Postglacial these valleys allow unimpeded access to the interior of the Alps by following rivers upstream. To cross the Alps, one has to simply climb a watershed pass to get from one river drainage to the next.



Spin the globe and stop in Sacramento, California. Drive east on Interstate 80 and a landscape somewhat similar to that of southern Germany soon emerges: an almost featureless plain transitions into foothills and then into mountains as high as the Alps–the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Try to dissociate from the brutal intrusion of the freeway: if you are aware and stop in the right locations, you can see that you are moving in an interwoven braid of travel strands all heading the same way but established at different times: before the freeway there was a two-lane highway, preserved in brief segments but mostly overlaid by four- to six-lane stretches of asphalt; there is the railroad, which takes a different route on occasion from the roadway because trains need gentler slopes than roads; there are traces of a toll wagon road that connected Donner Lake to Dutch Flat; and finally, there are subtle signs of the original immigrant track dating back to the 1840s–cart ruts, compacted soil, and rust marks from metal wheel rims.

Before extensive work shaped the slope of this transportation artery (first by Chinese laborers on the transcontinental railroad) two steep inclines had to be negotiated. One was on the eastern edge of the mountains where the Sierras rise abruptly from the Basin and Range province (there is a place called Roller Pass, which is as severe as it sounds). Unlike the Alps, which are the result of a collision between continental plates, the Sierras have a somewhat murky and more complicated origin (like much of the western United States): geologists have suggested that the Sierras are like a table top that is tilted up in the east as a sharp escarpment along fault lines but subsumed under alluvials at the gentle western slope. Thus, travelers on a westbound journey were faced with a steep and sudden transition from a desert to a high alpine environment. Horrific events, such as the demise of much of the Donner Party, ensued from this unexpected topography and the associated sudden change in temperature and weather. The gentler slope of the western Sierras should have made subsequent travel to the Sacramento River Valley simple. But the sloped table land of the western Sierras is dissected by deep river valleys that never experienced the erosive forces of glaciation. The valley sides were steep and the river bottoms choked on eroded bedrock. Reaching the plains involved steep descents from the ridges to the valleys.

To the migrants who traversed the Sierras but still carried within them the pastoral mental landscape of gentle verdant hills (of Western European origin but duplicated to a large extent in the eastern United States) the formidable barrier of desert and mountains represented nature at its most hostile. The forces of rock, wind, rain, and snow were untamed and seemingly unbridled by human cultivation. The landscape's raw power was alien to people who grew up in (or at least with the memory of) a landscape that was thoroughly and repeatedly shaped by human activity and rearranged by glaciation. Although glaciers had shaped parts of the high Sierras, their effect was limited to the tops of the mountains and did not reach far enough down to ease access. Traversing the Sierra Nevada range was therefore shockingly different from any lived or handed-down experience the migrants from the East Coast had (such as crossing the Alps).

And of course, traces of human activity were all around the migrants and visible to those who wished to notice. But the nature of the indigenous people's influence on the landscape was too alien for all but the most empathic of the settlers to understand or appreciate. Today there are little physical remains of the history of the ancestral Californians. We could say much the same of the neolithic or Bronze Age peoples of western Europe. But it is the sudden transition and tragic consequences that remain substantively different in the "new" world. Instead of a gradual development from one type of human culture to another, it is marked by a wholescale obliteration of one people by another. Is that what makes exploring landscape and history in the United States so melancholy?

To the chagrin of those of who like to wander (or drive) in a landscape, then, not all layers of the palimpsest are recoverable or even existent. There remain (just like in geology) great "unconformities"–lacunae that interrupt and mask the continuous flow of knowledge and recognition. Only once in a while is the veil rent: in 1911 a middle-aged member of the Yahi tribe of the Sierra foothills found that he could no longer survive on the dwindling resources left after more than half a century of the European settlers' land grabs and diseases. He walked onto a local ranch and was taken to

by Mark Cachia-Riedl

Illustrations by Tali Burry Schnepp

San Francisco. After a few years, he traveled back to the deep canyons where he had lived with a party of white Americans and offered them a unique glimpse of his last refuge. There was no mention of the undoubted fact that his ancestors had lived in the much more welcoming regions now occupied by farmers and ranchers. In the Alps, the preserved body of another man of similar age was discovered in the ice in 1991; it was determined that he had died about five thousand years ago. His tools, weapons, stomach contents, and bones partially filled in the vacuum of knowledge that exists before humans actively recorded their history. The two, one can imagine, could have exchanged their ways of surviving, although it seems unlikely that their experience of loss and displacement would have matched. Different landscapes, different inscriptions of human suffering. An invisible layer inextricably woven into the landscape.

Attached to the landscape is yet another invisible layer: a web of ownership wherever humans exercise their presumptive domain (neither of the men mentioned above exercised anything like ownership of land as it is understood in agricultural western Europe or the United States, it is safe to say). In the United States ownership of land has always been simple and trifold: land allocated to subjugated aboriginal tribes (often temporarily); land held in domain by state or federal government; and individually-owned plots (although often mortgaged to banks). The European tangle of pseudo-feudal obligations that ran with estates was explicitly rejected. So was the idea of commonly held land or–even more radical–of land that was not subject to formal ownership at all. Go back once more to the spot just below the ridge, where the village was located between the drier fields above and the wet pastures downslope. The location of dwellings became more permanent over time and was locked into place once a stone church had been constructed (in many areas of western Europe, beginning during the early Middle Ages and peaking around the year 1000 AD). As society came to be differentiated and ownership and overlordship were connected to clergy and nobility, the landscape came to be overlaid by another page of the palimpsest. Unallocated, commonly shared land became scarcer and was increasingly encumbered by strict rules. On his own plot, a farmer could have obligations tied to the land he cultivated that required fees or goods to be paid to a church, a monastery, or a lord, or all three. No longer a serf or slave by the late 18th century, he could sell his real estate and usually change his place of abode freely; but the web of ownership and interests ran with the fields, pastures, and wood lots. Instead of open pastoral woodland and shared fields, the land was subdivided, fenced, assessed, and delineated. No longer tied together by personal fiefs as in a feudal society, landscape itself–real estate–became the medium of social differentiation and mutual dependency.

The palimpsest of landscape speaks to us wherever we look. But it's not always signposted, easy to read, or preserved at all. It stretches from plate tectonics to the latest ditch dug on your street. It never screams but whispers. Put your ear to the ground, open your eyes. Nothing is trivial.

S W A N S O N G

by Anna Kristina Moseidjord

Her math rises with her smoke:

see cause —

americas the most important country
and california is THE state and
Oaklands the best city and
ours is the coolest school and we're
the coolest kids so —

ergo.

The big smoke words,
the no class street laugh,
the shopping cart —

Kids, just the coolest, kids
like the next ones or the ones before.
Coolest alive.

And she is also a fumbling mistake.
She has borne things I couldn't have,
started fires that killed families.
She has raised and razed and suffered and devoured, high priestess of the black night, child.

And we were dead thereafter but you should've heard
Her voice! Silk
and water and pure surety sugar —

You couldn't have said
No! or
Stop! or
Slow down!

You would've driven towards the canyon bottom, taken the trip —
you would have met the ancient lakebed too,
licked salt out of your wounds, devoted
yourself and everything else in your possession to the cause —The cause!
of the coolest kids alive.
You should have heard her voice.
You should have been my bones when they heard it.
You should have swallowed yourself like I did and allowed her hands to crawl down your throat without
any even tiny words to say it hurt and was not what you'd planned.

The First Thing is to
be someone else's cells,
and the Second is to try (to throat crawl and cry about it),
and the Last is to return to the simple fact of succeeding. To stir salt pilar bodies back to one.

Two in the Garden

"U+ME" and "Insignias"- a walk through of works by Milton Resnik and Matthew Wong

by Tali Burry-Schnepp

cont'd from page 1

In the foyer there is a blurb on the wall for each artist stating their background and education. Resnick, born in Ukraine, emigrated with his family to the US as a child while Wong was born in Toronto to a Chinese immigrant family. Resnick gained formal artistic training at Pratt Institute while Wong, a self-taught painter, had degrees in cultural anthropology and photography. Both were self-taught poets. The short writings make sure to remind the viewer that both artists died by their own hand (Resnick at eighty-seven, Wong at thirty-five). I already knew of both artist's suicides, yet it takes me aback to have a veil of darkness thrust over these painters whose work lights an ecstatic fire in me. I continue into the gallery space uneasily. The first wall of pictures presents five nocturnal landscapes. The first is still and quiet, but as I continue, the paintings become uneasy, jagged, and shifting. By the fourth, some carnal fleshy portal has appeared, paint oozes from behind a wall of trees, a red wound is opening. The landscape is made bodily: not mother earth with her face in the cliffs and breasts in the hills but the inside stuff, the blood and guts, love and withering. The subject will not let me rest in its subject-ness, it is a documentation of something emerging, like those moments in darkness in which you feel something watching and soon the contents of every crevice is after you, the very definition of *more than meets the eye*.

The walls are filled not only with paintings, but with poems by both artists which echo the expressions of the paintings. They brood but do not wallow. I think I can see some part of the darkness which plagued these men, one that is born not of contempt for the world but of openness to those neglected crevices of the spirit. When hurt and shadow crept in, neither Resnick nor Wong shrank away. An artist conceives of black as incredibly dense, not at all empty. Throw any color at black, it's still black; to look closer and discover its contents is to find a rainbow. So I imagine this feeling not as depressed withdrawal, but heart-thumping fear and inevitable loneliness, standing at the precipice of something completely wonderful and greater than you, all while sitting alone, trying to paint a little picture.

Skin:

Skin is something to peel back
Layer by layer, fold by fold
Until you are at its core,
Where you may stay as long
As you please, and when you're done
You just seal it back up
Like a package waiting for the next person
To come along, like a message in a bottle

-Matthew Wong

There is another painting by Resnick in the room, a simple landscape with a tree and a permanent green-hued diagonal horizon. It is probably not a special painting, being of no particular compositional or material prowess, but it is surely a painting for me. I look at it and feel myself in crisp air, out with a french easel on my shoulder, just about to give up my search for a spot to paint. I feel like an intruder, walking on top of the land and not in it, until something says hello, and the whole ordinary scene starts to breathe and shift without changing at all. Like that camera technique where the foreground stays the same distance while the background zooms in and out. This feeling, this moment, is why I come out to paint, when the scene seems to choose you, to suggest a little piece of the vast wonder that lies in front of you. The trouble is, I have never painted this feeling and may never be able to, so my feeling in front of this painting is something like: "Thank god for Milton Resnick." Here is proof that this life is not all about pensive, solitary brooding. There is so much evidence here of the shining reverence which a deep seer is blessed with. What joy to feel so much is lurking under every little moment.

On the second floor things start to change. The first painting of Resnick's I see is two orange figures on a simple blue, beige and green ground with a squiggle above them called, "You and Me". My heart softens; this painting, again so simple, has reached right to the core of me and brought memories of deep love to the surface. These generalized figures will break your heart with tenderness: adorable, but fiery and real, wandering in crude flesh. They seem to need each other although they do not touch or face each other. The wall continues with images of figures in twos and threes and now a tree, now a garden has appeared. I see now that these are paintings of Genesis and have a suspicion that that squiggle above the figures is the snake. These paintings are bare bones, each character boiled down to its simplest form, but they are far from general. The figures are distinctly innocent, lost and corruptible, even the tree, a simple "Y" shape, has a very similar posture and presence as the figures. The thick veil of paint creates an atmosphere that keeps the world mysterious and dreamlike, a true feeling of myth and archetype. These scenes exist only in the realm of emergent meaning, there is no beginning, middle and end, just a set of archetypes which extend to infinity.

Wong's work echoes Resnick's Genesis paintings, all containing nude figures in nature in twos and threes, however they take this eternal story of man and the garden and place it in time and flesh. The messiness and anxiety of being is latent in these pictures. They seem to focus on moments of such deep self consciousness that the feeling becomes transcendent. A feeling that everything inside you is swirling and pressing out towards a wholly different air. Wong, being diagnosed with autism, Tourette syndrome, and clinical depression, seems to have struggled deeply with negotiating the operations of his mind with the conditions of the outside world, however, his art does not work to communicate this rift, and instead gives the viewer the privilege of accessing his unique intelligence in interpreting the world around him. There is a painting of Wong's on the first floor which does this in a personal way, showing the back of a head filled with red dots as a crowd stands around staring, you feel that you are that head with red dots, trapped and blushing. But now the paintings go a step further, managing to portray such human vulnerability in pictures that feel transcendent and mythological. In a painting titled "Sleeping in the Grass", a nude male and female figure lay on a ground painted in staccato strokes of many bright colors. The man's entire insides are shown: skelton, organs and all. The woman is all skin with a bright red face. Again I see a self conscious scene, a moment of desire, your whole body pulsing with distance from the thing you want so close. Yet there is the same feeling of tenderness between them that I see in Resnick's "You and Me", one that is pure and unspoken. The magic of these pictures is they do not wallow in anxiety, instead they bring out something transcendent in the feeling. I can feel the whole world buzzing, each entity treated with a different kind of pattern that seems to illustrate a world of swirling vibrations. Every piece of matter is awake. The grass is as alive as the people are. Wong's awareness does not stop at the self, but instead trusts an internal sensitivity to interpret the world through a mystical, even magical, perspective.

The Year of the Rat:

A red truck is driving by, Loud and insufferable
Just as a rat darts past
In the opposite direction.
I was born in the year of the Rat, According to the Chinese Zodiac.
I am seated on a park bench And see and hear both the truck And the rat making their ways
Through the space that surrounds me, But I feel no bigger or smaller Than either of them. All things move
Towards the same finish line:
The rat, the truck, its driver,
The bench, the park, the half-eaten Ham sandwich on top of the book Next to me, the man who wrote That book, words, poetry, civilization.
But no matter; for now the sun Is in my lap, and it feels good.

-Matthew Wong

As I walk up to the third floor, I notice I'm alone for the first time. As the door shuts behind me, I stand facing a little cubicle–still as it was–that served as Resnick's studio at the end of his life. The corner is dark and full of mystery, especially compared to the shadowless clarity of the gallery space to which it is attached. In this approximately 10'x6' area a single easel stands, holding an unfinished painting of a cross shape inside of concentric rectangles. The

Matthew Wong, *Sleeping in the Grass,* 2016, Acrylic on paper
12x9 inches

gallery walls are filled with these "Insignia " paintings, all crosses surrounded by one or two rectangles of color. These paintings are distinct for Resnick, dealing in rigid, totalizing symbols. It seems, however, to be a natural progression, starting in a world of paint and flesh and ascending into the myth of the garden. Now, standing in front of these bold abstractions I can't help but see an axis mundi. In the blaring warm light and total quiet I feel my heart lift in ecstasy, I have made it to the place where everything is pure, no more mess, just glowing truth. But when I catch a glimpse of that dark studio again: a pair of Adidas slides, a skull, a small Venus Demilo, a photo of Rasputin, all decorate the little cave. I am reminded I have left nowhere, I am still here and so was he. While these paintings may indeed show a sense of clarity they are not all lightness, they come at great cost. There he is, above it all, forced into his perch by all his work, all that debilitating aging flesh, clinging to the tree of life, mapping the garden below. In his earlier life Resnick's studio occupied an entire floor of the building, but as he aged and his body slowly withered, he was forced to find new ways of working. His frustration with his new bodily limitations was what eventually led him to take his own life but in the meantime here he was so close to the other side, and in that inbetween a new clarity has emerged. While Resnick's most famous earlier works are "pure abstraction", they seem to be grasping for the tactile nature of the world, full of desire and sensuality. These paintings are different, the symbols are like language, stark and whole, absolutely true but far from the physical. Paintings for the end of the line.

Untitled (Thoughts About a Tree)

After love you have to have art
The beautiful confession of spirit
Don't look for bodies
You don't have to be ponderous
The overall thing is first
Here and there signs of wear
Evidence of the old man
Glad to be alive

-Milton Resnick

Milton Resnick, *You and Me*, 1994, Oil on canvas
30x40 inches

Photos courtesy of Tali Burry-Schnepp

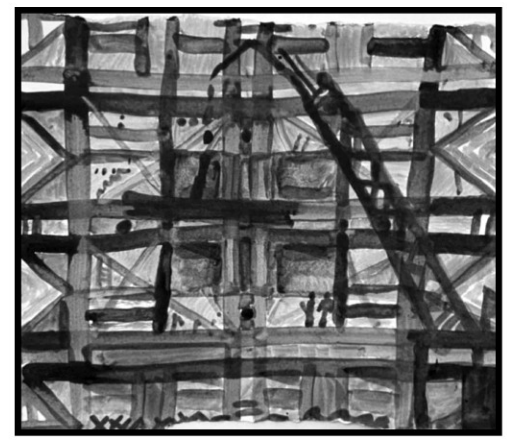
Taken at the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation

POOR TREATMENT

cont'd from page 1

by Bill Wallace

Illustrations by Henry Murphy

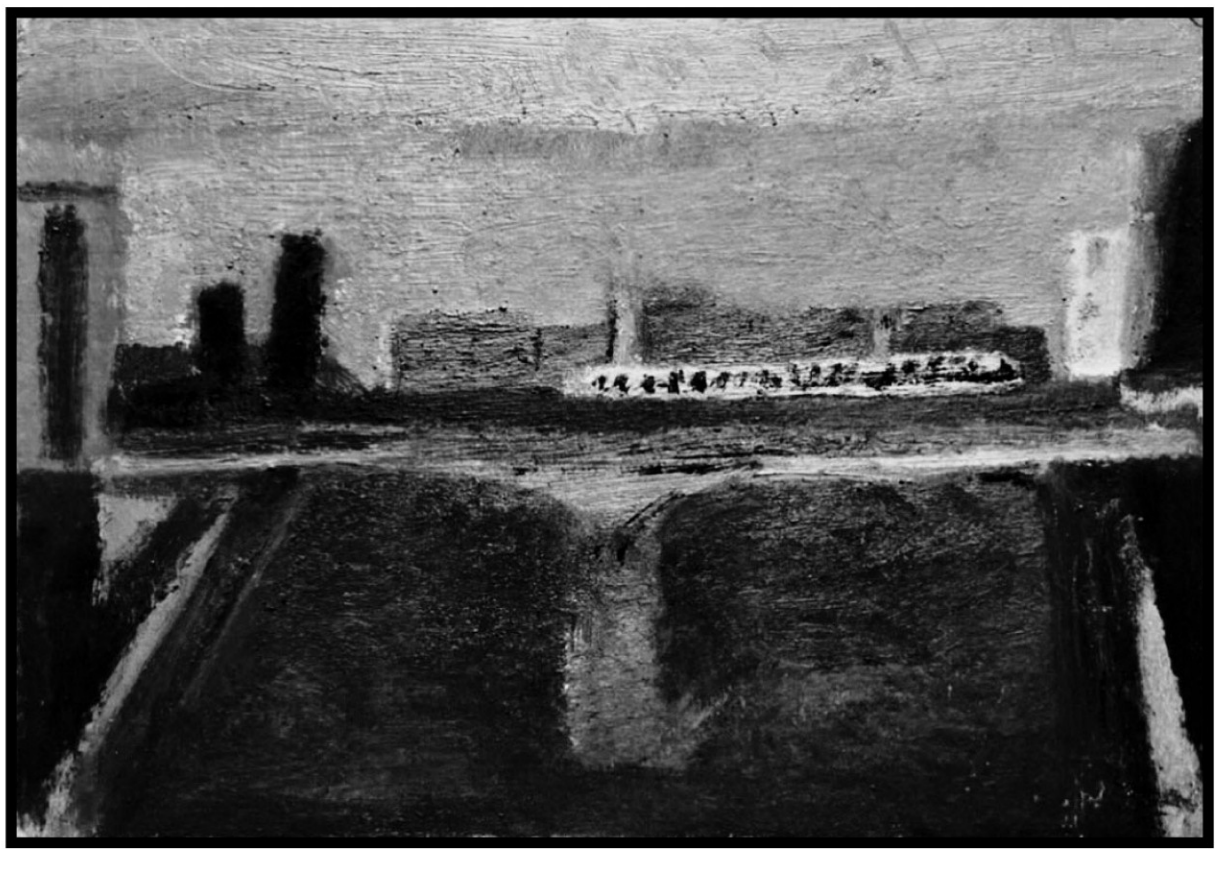


We have a Mayor who ran, and won, on a platform of returning law and order to a city that had descended into chaos, though it is still not clear whether we actually had, or whether Adams won because he said he would protect voters from what he had caused them to fear. And thus the liberal counterargument takes aim at the existence of the problem itself: actually, the crime rate is lower than it has ever been. Actually, people with SMI are 10 times more likely to be victims of a violent crime than the general population. Actually, the number of people who live on the street and in the subways is a fraction of the more than hundred thousand people who are homeless in New York. Actually, rich people were just pissed that, during the pandemic, the homeless had been given hotel rooms on the Upper West Side and Midtown rather than remaining in their rightful place out of sight on the furthest reaches of the city: shuttered nursing homes in Canarsie, motels next to the JFK tarmac.

Each one of these points is true in themselves, and it is crucial to understand the distinctions they make (mental illness does not equal violence, and homelessness does not equal mental illness). And yet, these arguments' main utility is in regard to mental illness, violence, and homelessness in general. When brought to bear against the 94 acts of violence in the *Times*, they seem oddly beside the point.

The problem at stake in the Times pieces is frequently framed as a failure to provide "treatment" -- that if someone had just had been taken to the hospital, if someone had been put in the right shelter, if someone had just had been reminded more regularly to take their medication, they wouldn't have slipped through the cracks, unsupervised and liable to shove a passerby. I have never quite known what is meant by "treatment" here, other than a concise way of stating that one wishes people with mental illness went elsewhere, away, or simply do what they are told. It certainly is not a "treatment" that actually exists.

For the people I work with, here is what treatment actually looks like: if you enter the shelter system and disclose you have a mental illness, you are placed in a "mental health shelter," which is simply a shelter with other people who have serious mental illness. The specific diagnosis means little; you might have PTSD from surviving domestic violence, your roommate might be in the midst of psychosis and scream through the night. These shelters have increased clinical services, which often means a psychiatrist has office hours two afternoons a week, should you choose to stop by. If you exhibit threatening behavior (claiming you will shoot staff, throwing furniture), the minimally-paid and trained staff onsite have little recourse but to call an ambulance and/or the cops. They might arrive, find you have calmed down, and leave until they are called and told you have done something worse. Or perhaps they do try to convince you to take a ride with them, but after a few minutes of hearing you resolutely decline, they shrug their shoulders and head on their way.



Here you might wonder about Eric Adams' November 2022 announcement that the City would start involuntarily hospitalizing people, even if they were not an active threat, but merely unable to take care of themselves. This, too, conjured a series of images whose connection to reality was tenuous. In a time of reaction against the George Floyd rebellions, against the twilight of the populist left, from Occupy to Bernie Sanders, that limned the 2010s with promise and ended with the mandatory election of an octogenarian, the Mayor wants (and was elected) to be a grownup ready to dispel naiveté and make the tough choices, lawyers and libs be damned. For his critics, the announcement unapologetically careened through safeguards for civil liberty to advance the front lines of the City's war against those it found undesirable. The sad truth is the Mayor was announcing something dumber: pretty much nothing. The law already allowed for involuntary hospitalizations, exactly how the Mayor described them. His announcement was fake news in its most literal sense — information that appeared to be news and wasn't.

In fact, the Mayor's announcement was not one, but two sleights of hand. Even if we accepted the premise that the City was going to put their foot down and start herding more people into ambulances and off to the ER - were we supposed to believe that this would be the end of the story? It wasn't as if the actual problem was that people who are homeless were not going to hospitals. In New York City, adults who are homeless have three times more hospital and ER visits than the general population. But for people with severe psychiatric conditions that likely have been compounded over years, if not decades, ERs don't offer treatment so much as an invitation to chill out and some well wishes. The likeliest outcome for a single adult patient from a shelter is that they will be evaluated by a clinician who has never met them before, be given a diagnosis based on the smattering of info in their chart and be prescribed a new round of meds. After a night or two, they will be sent back from whence they came. Maybe they will remember to take the meds, if they want to. Among my colleagues, the term for this approach to medicine is *treat 'em and street 'em*.

I have watched people go in and out of the ER's revolving door for years on end, picking up new diagnoses and drugs along the way. One man goes to the hospital on a daily basis - when he's craving attention, or perhaps a bite to eat. Another takes the Metro-North to ERs in Westchester because he knows they don't recognize his face there yet. The meds only work if they can remember to take them, which is assuming that they want to, which is assuming that the pills don't make them feel worse. They go back to sleeping in a room of 10 other people with mental illness and they fall apart. They get sent back to the hospital. Rinse, repeat. A few years of this will leave someone so tattered that there's nothing much left to treat.

To be clear, this is not the path taken by all people with mental illness in shelters, or even the majority of them. Many might pull together income and a rental voucher or get approved for a "supportive housing" program, where people with SMI and substance use disorders who can manage living independently are given housing with clinical services onsite. In shelter, they are able to find ways to keep their head down, to cope until they get there. The spiral I am describing is primarily the fate of those who can't.

The pop culture panic regarding violence and mental illness typically focuses on the violence homeless people perpetrate, which is only half of the violence in question. The other half is the violence they endure: the suffering that is required of them to access the systems we have for managing extreme poverty.

"Before nearly 100 random attacks in New York City," a subheading for the Times' piece reads, "the mentally ill homeless people who committed them were failed by a system that keeps making the same errors." The article proceeds to tell the stories of the perpetrators of these acts, diagnosing each as a result of a different bureaucratic mistake. One wasn't put in a "mental health" shelter where supposedly they would have received care. Another was discharged from the hospital too soon, even though they technically could have kept them there for another two weeks. On a third, it seems to imply that it was a pity that a man couldn't be medicated against his will.

Many of the case studies point to legitimate failings, both individual and systemic. But if we believe that correcting these failings would have prevented these attacks, we're conning ourselves just as much as the Mayor is conning us. We can monitor homeless people with mental illness more closely; we can hold them in hospitals for longer, and make sure mobile treatment teams spend more time following them around. None of these measures change the fact that what we have to offer people who are homeless and severely ill are lives of desperation.

New York is one of the only places in the country with a "right to shelter," mandating that the city must provide shelter to anyone who has nowhere else to go. (This remains true during the so-called migrant crisis, despite the Mayor's wishing it weren't so.) The only thing this right guarantees you, however, is a bed and a meal. It is a social safety net that interprets our collective responsibility as ensuring only the barest survival. It is not a right to dignity, nor to wellbeing. Those we expect you to earn. On one level, this is what causes people who are mentally ill to fall through every crack between institutions that cannot meet their needs: they are allowed to, because when all else fails, at least they have the right to shelter. This isn't because the system is broken, as the *Times* argued; this simply *is* the system. We have no other.

This has long been the case, and it's hard to tell when the current swell of dread about homelessness began anew. My sense was that it started in some diffuse way during the pandemic. In chatter within my pod and Twitter posts here and there from the pundit class. As we ventured back out into the city, the encampments we skirted and the muttering subway riders we tried to ignore were beginning to form the shape of a pattern. Surely it had not been quite like this before? During the months of quarantine, we had been left to picture mass death in the world outside of our apartments: in ICUs with no visiting hours, in the Javits Center, on a boat in the New York Harbor we saw pictures of on the news. Our leaders had no cogent plan to stop it. A strategy that was floated: let it infect everyone, and those who survive will be immune. Maybe we saw, in the anguished faces of those we encountered on the street or the train, the realization now dawning on us: there was no system in place to protect us, no one out there with the answers. It is this, rather than the pain and sickness of the poor, that I would suggest we be afraid of. ◆

domestic

The harsh lilt of your words did not (does not) disturb me. I
am used to it.

You say things like pan
or *gate*
like you're trying to tell me something.

Once the words strike (are struck)
they cool between us.

I am used to how far it is
between your *pan* and my reply.
Mostly I don't believe love asks us to say

words back to back.

where the nudists run the beach bar

All day Big Dick Lorca would walk the beach, ask men
about their books, get his wife water.

During business hours,
Lorca tucked himself into shorts,
his little cut offs ending
just below the bar top.

He laughed with a golden front tooth. I
wanted what he had.

Poems by by Anna Kristina Moseidjord

Movies From the Wound

a Review of *Pulse*

by Shea Stevenson

Illustration by Ana Neifeld

cont'd from page 1

But *Pulse* can take solace in that, meta-narratively, it is far from alone. Its fears and modes of thought cohere to a larger, naturally disorganized cinematic movement, as-yet-unnamed. This "movement" is, more precisely, a sort of cultural infection. Each piece of art is only recognizable as a carrier of the infection because it displays similar symptoms; indeed, they are not made, but diagnosed. *Pulse* is special even among its peers here because it's so fully overtaken with these typical symptoms, embodies them so openly. It's the worst case we've ever seen. Doctors are flying in from all over the world to see the readings in person. We'll call them, then, "Movies From The Wound."

What is The Wound? As short as I can manage, The Wound is that modern cities just fucking suck.

Cities are a form of ideological/material technology (if indeed there's a difference–I'm not sure yet) that, as much as we work to shape it, also shapes us. Once we've built the machine to our specifications–this moment, for the Modern City, would have probably been the conception of an Industrial London–it's immediately turned against us in ways we do not understand. Its desires, sometimes mysterious but often obvious, manifest in its borders and rates of flow (freeways that block parade-paths, easier to quell revolts), its heating apparatuses (in New York: room by room; in the old Soviet Union: complex by complex), its train lines (why the fuck is it so hard to get to Queens? [it's right there!]), and so forth. We live in the city, so we are ground to fit its gears.

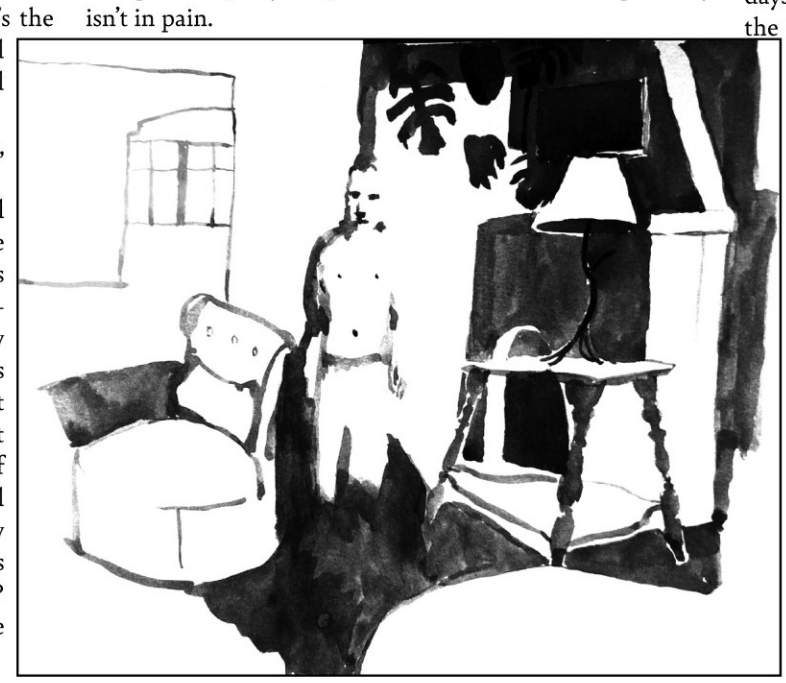
The Wound is evidenced in the places where our bodies and our social beings are literally being injured by this process, where these technologies *want* something from us, and we cannot give it. Caught in the machine, we break. It's a socio-corporeal organ-transfer rejection. Other famous rejections include the likes of *Black Girl* (1966), *Wings of Desire* (1987), *After Hours* (1985), *Akira* (1988), *Do The Right Thing* (1989), *Inherent Vice* (2014), *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), *The Conversation* (1974), AND MORE!

There are three unmistakable symptoms of The Wound, explored best through the case study of the Great Patient 2001, *Pulse*. A movie From The Wound must be:

I. scared
II. obsessed with space
III. prescient and/or oracular.

Pulse is SCARED! Not just as mentioned above (the shadowboxer, the beguiled raving nihilist with a clear desire to be proven wrong) but in a more specific way than perhaps even it knows, itself. Its fear ultimately comes from a confrontation with the unknown via contact with The Wound, which can always be phrased as a question. A rhetorical question sometimes, but just as often (and in *Pules*'s case) not: *What have we done to ourselves?* It doesn't know! Even the movies that try to answer this question are bedraggled by the need to interface with its massiveness, and always, at the very least, are terrified of their answers.

Pulse's genre and unconsummated paranoia predispose it especially to showing us this essential fear. That invisible enemy gives it a manic quality all its own, and leaves it jumping at shadows, looking for horror in the most base elements of cinema (a lack of clear sight, a lack of clear hearing), and punching walls. The trick here is that the wall, incidentally, is the correct target. A movie that isn't scared isn't punching anything. A movie that isn't scared probably isn't in pain.



Pulse is OBSESSED WITH SPACE! The Wound is a wound in space, and so are its progeny. The needs of the city are etched in its street's patterns, its building's heights, its sewage lines, its public transit, its methods of collecting garbage, shit, taxes, food, etc. All processes of space and logistics, not unlike a cut.

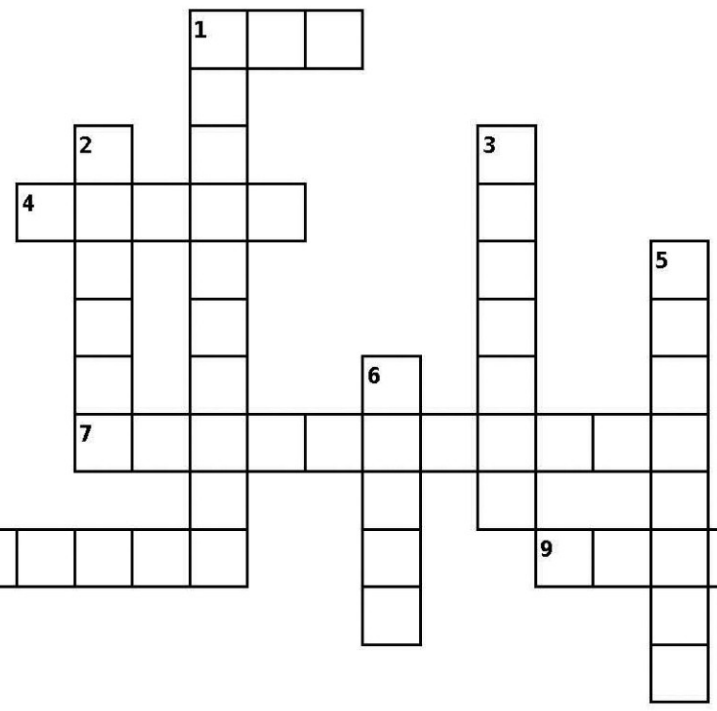
This fixation is all-encompassing and obvious: in *Pulse*, the afterlife is full, and now the new dead, spilling over, inhabit our technology. The ghosts are products of techno-theological overpopulation. Their horror is that they reveal a seemingly primordial structure to be fallible, its borders in fact fickle, and the world we live in to in fact be *finite*; there is no infinite expansion, no infinite dumping ground for the dead, we will in fact one day run out of materials and space. But what's left, what's more enduring, is that this only serves to reinforce the city's absolute and rigid structures. As the movie progresses, we see an imagined omega-point of the neoliberal-capitalist model of the city: each thing in its Own Room, forever. Everyone in *Pulse* only seems to have work-friends, seems to struggle to see them despite obvious proximity, seems to ultimately prefer to keep to their rooms. Public space grows more and more starkly empty as the movie goes on. The whims of the city, its political demand for a certain kind of labor force, is here imagined as finally holistically working: *fine, here's the sort of people you want: they're ghosts. We're all finally dead.* The only peace to be found in *Pulse* is at sea–the city as a space is unsalvageable.

Pulse is PRESCIENT! Though The Wound itself does not beget prescience, this is the line that separates the merely *affected* from the *sick*. It is, in another way of thinking, well observed. Easily *Pulse*'s most culturally enduring element is its fixation on the early internet. Its insight is simple, but something we really don't hear these days written so plainly: the internet bears, if not literally the same Wound as urbanization, a Wound so similar that the difference is mostly semantic. Especially from the year 2024, we can see the same promise of connection, the technological revolution allowing for new forms of communicating, living with, and relating to one another, and the eventual wrangling-together of a more homogenized Capitalist Machine, always tearing itself down and restructuring to fit the investment needs of its day. It's played out in triple speed this time. And The Wound–how fast it grows! How quickly we are again wrapt in our strange loneliness! That same loneliness! Our lives again unfit, always unfit (and how could they not be?) for the needs of its all encompassing technology. This is 2001. Oracular indeed.

When I first watched *Pulse*, I was in a student housing situation that is worse than most scams. For an absurd amount of money, I was sharing half of a small hotel room with a roommate to whom I tried not to speak, sitting in my mandatory wooden anti-suicide chair, wearing too-small slippers from Target on cold tile floor, in the dark, with the movie on my desktop. Headphones on. It was my first place in Brooklyn, or New York City for that matter. I encourage readers at home to give this a try (all of it).

Pulse, even in subsequent less overtly scare-conducive viewings, always seems to know where I am and what I'm doing. Its techniques, even, are far ahead of its time–fit to the tastes of an Online twenty-twenties twenty-something. It has more in common with what we might today call "analog-horror" and what we imagine Creepypasta writers are gesturing towards than with its contemporaries (aside from, say, *Ringu*). Its sound design has genuine moments of "was that my computer or the movie?" which for 2001 is divine inspiration. Watching it in the dark, there are moments (placed *just so*) where the screen goes black, and the blurred face you can barely make out is your own.
It comes upon these techniques A) first, ha ha, and B) grimly honestly. All of this lends to its oracular qualities. To say it plain: it seems like *Pulse* was made to be watched on a home computer. *Pulse* is a movie aware not just of its fictional space, but its *literal* space. It is made *for* the insular, personal, digital space that it's afraid of.

To watch Pulse is not just to know The Wound, but to be drawn into it. To watch Pulse is to know yourself more clearly through its vision, where you, on the receiving end of its call, are proof of its prophecy. ❐



ACROSS

1. A word trying to tell you something
4. Springtime bloom
7. This right here, yeah?
8. Theme of this issue
9. Chekov's _____

DOWN

1. Layers of history
2. A directive to all enterprising writers
3. Something to be picked apart, or choked on
5. Brooklyn College's longstanding newspaper
6. Coined terminology for injury on us city dwellers

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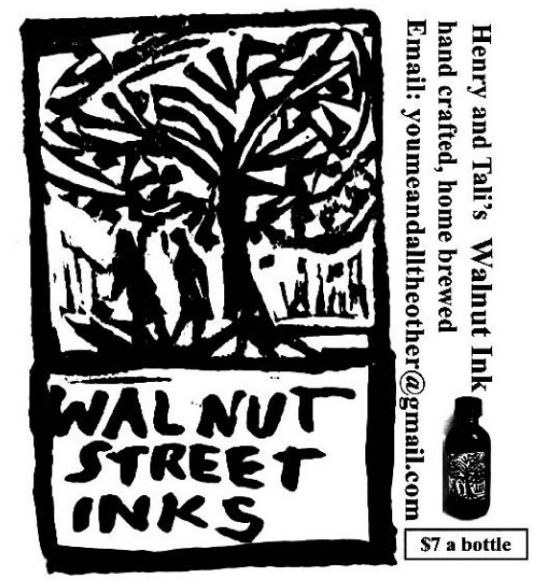

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